

Message Text

SECRET

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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S E C R E T CAIRO 14815

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR EG JO
SUBJ: EGYPTIAN/JORDANIAN DIALOGUE

1. ON FLIGHT BACK FROM ALEXANDRIA TO CAIRO YESTERDAY WITH VP MUBARAK, I RECALLED THAT SADAT AND HE HAD TOLD ME IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE VP'S RETURN SEVERAL WEEKS AGO FROM VISITS TO JORDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA THAT KING HUSSEIN HAD AGREED "100 PERCENT" WITH SADAT'S SUGGESTION THAT THE KING JOIN IN PEACE TALKS ON THE BASIS OF THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL THAT THE WEST BANK BE RETURNED TO JORDAN AND THE GAZA STRIP TO EGYPT. IN VIEW OF MY SUBSEQUENT DEPARTURE FOR CONSULTATIONS IN THE U.S., I HAD NOT HAD A CHANCE TO DISCUSS MATTER FURTHER WITH HIM UNTIL NOW. I NOTED THAT WE HAVE SINCE THAT TIME RECEIVED SEVERAL INDICATIONS FROM AMMAN AND JIDDA THAT HUSSEIN DOES NOT SEEM TO BE WILLING TO ENGAGE HIMSELF IN TALKS.

2. MUBARAK INSISTED THAT DURING HIS TALKS WITH HUSSEIN AND VARIOUS ROYAL ADVISERS, THE KING HAD SAID HE WAS "100 PERCENT" BEHIND THE IDEA AND WOULD ACTIVELY SUPPORT IT. HE, MUBARAK, HAD SUBSEQUENTLY SO INFORMED PRINCE

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FAHD. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, I.D., AFTER HUSSEIN'S VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA, GOE HAD RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM FAHD SAYING THAT HUSSEIN SEEMED TO BE "RELUCTANT" TO GO ALONG. AT THE TIME THIS MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED JORDANIAN SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT AKIL FAIZ WAS VISITING CAIRO AND HAD MEETINGS WITH SADAT. SADAT MENTIONED TO HIM THE SAUDI MESSAGE THAT HUSSEIN SEEMED TO BE VACILLATING. AKIL FAIZ

THEREUPON SENT URGENT MESSAGE TO HUSSEIN QUERYING THE KING ABOUT HIS POSITION. DAY LATER FAIZ INDICATED HUSSEIN HAD ASKED HIM ASSURE SADAT THAT THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN THE KING'S POSITION AND THAT HE WOULD ACTIVELY SUPPORT THE IDEA. MUBARAK CAUSTICALLY COMMENTED THIS IS TYPICAL HUSSEIN WAVERING. HE SAID THERE HAVE BEEN NO FURTHER EXCHANGES WITH HUSSEIN SINCE THAT TIME.

3. LATER LAST EVENING, OSAMA EL-BAZ (WHO ACCOMPANIED MUBARAK FOR TALKS) SHED SOME LIGHT ON SEEMING CONFUSION. ACCORDING EL-BAZ, HUSSEIN HAD FROM OUTSET QUALIFIED HIS WILLINGNESS ACTIVELY TO SUPPORT SADAT'S IDEA BY INSISTING ON EITHER AN ISRAELI GUARANTEED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE WEST BANK OR A UNITED STATES GUARANTEE THAT ISRAEL WILL WITHDRAW FROM THE WEST BANK. ACCORDING EL-BAZ, HUSSEIN HAD RUEFULLY NOTED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM PRESIDENTS JOHNSON, NIXON AND FORD THAT ISRAEL WILL HAVE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE WEST BANK, BUT NOTHING HAD HAPPENED. IT IS EL-BAZ'S VIEW THAT WITHOUT SOME SUCH GUARANTEE, HUSSEIN IS NOT PREPARED ACTIVELY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PEACE EFFORTS AT THIS TIME. ALTHOUGH EL-BAZ REITERATED THE STANDARD EGYPTIAN LINE ON THE DESIRABILITY OF HUSSEIN ENGAGING HIMSELF IN THE PEACE TALKS, HE ALSO INDICATED UNDERSTANDING FOR HUSSEIN'S RELUCTANCE TO DO SO WITHOUT SOME SORT OF ASSURANCE OF WHAT THE OUTCOME WILL BE.

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4. COMMENT: WHEN TELLING ME ABOUT HUSSEIN'S ALLEGED AGREEMENT, NEITHER SADAT NOR MUBARAK MENTIONED THE KING'S QUALIFICATIONS. THEY OBVIOUSLY PREFERRED TO EMPHASIZE THE POSITIVE, THOUGH THE INCIDENT UNDERSCORES NEED FOR SOME KIND OF A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, WHICH WILL INCLUDE SATISFACTORY WITHDRAWAL LANGUAGE, IF SADAT'S CURRENT ISOLATION ON ME PEACE FRONT IS TO BE CORRECTED. EILTS

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